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ABSTRACT

This concept paper prepared for a conference on the theme of "2000 and Beyond: Preparing Quality Leaders for the Schools of Tomorrow," offers some suggestions for how future school leaders should prepare in order to develop pre- and in-service programs for current and future elementary and middle school principals. The paper offers a model of quality education that is based on lasting principles of excellence, dignity, and connectedness, with excellence conceived of as surpassing one's personal best, dignity being achieved by choosing actions and participating in activities that contribute to self-esteem and self-respect, and connectedness meaning drawing people together rather than separating, segregating, or discriminating against them, and including others in decision making. A quality education requires a supportive environment, which is defined as an organization that reaches toward the future and has leaders who possess the skills for building a community of learners. Such a supportive environment can be conceptualized as having four cornerstones that represent fundamental human needs: to live, to love, to learn, to leave a legacy. Other sections of the paper discuss related literature and research, the fit of the model, and implications for the profession. (Contains 22 references.) (CH)

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2000 AND BEYOND:

Preparing Quality Leaders for the Schools of Tomorrow

A Model for a Mission

Presented at the 51st Annual Conference of the

National Council of Professors of Educational Administration

Vail, Colorado August 11 - 16, (1997

by

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RE: Model for a Mission

A Model for a Mission, a concept paper was delivered at the annual conference of the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration (NCPEA) in 1997. In keeping with the conference theme, *2000 and Beyond: Preparing Quality Leaders for the Schools of Tomorrow*, the paper suggests concepts and ideas for what future school leaders have to be prepared to do.

The audience are professors in higher education responsible for professional development pre-service and in-service programs for current and future elementary and middle school principals.

A Model for a Mission has not been published elsewhere. There are 11 pages and about 2850 words including headers and references.

A Model for a Mission

INTRODUCTION

Challenged by the current dissatisfaction with business as usual in the schools, the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration (NCPEA) designed their 1997 conference to think beyond generalizations about improving education. Instead, the NCPEA sought to restructure their programs for preparing school leaders. Colleagues convened for the important and demanding task of applying energy, ability and resources to altering the structure of their programs to prepare Quality Leaders for the School of Tomorrow.

A Model for a Mission offered a conceptual framework for considering possibilities our conference, *2000 and Beyond: Preparing Quality Leaders for the Schools of Tomorrow.*

A MODEL FOR A MISSION

"In today are the seeds of tomorrow" summarizes A *Model for A Mission.* As today's leaders and those being prepared for tomorrow search for a desired future for their schools and communities, they need a framework for taking action and for judging the effectiveness of their action. Tomorrow's leaders will need knowledge, skills and dispositions of mind and heart that will equip them to eliminate barriers to effective behavior. *The Model for a Mission* suggests a framework for school leaders to use as they work to fulfill the mission and purpose of the educational enterprise.

School leaders, prepared for the middle level and high school of 2000 and beyond must be learning leaders ® (Kushner, 1990), i.e., leaders of learning in the classroom, the school, the district and who constantly are learning to lead better. It is

this kind of leadership that supports and enhances the mission of the school: to provide a quality education that is based on and grounded in lasting principles and is delivered in a supportive educational environment.

While many think it necessary to change the way we do business in schools, few are thinking through the complexity of that change. *A Model for a Mission* suggests a return to fundamentals, to the underlying purpose of the school. It conceptualizes a way to prepare school leaders for 2000 and beyond to take action and to judge whether that action flows from fundamental purposes and contributes to principles of excellence, dignity and connectedness.

FUNDAMENTAL PURPOSE

Despite changes and development in educational practice over the years, the basic goals of education have remained the same. The purpose of the school is to give young people marketable skills with which to make their way in the world as productive, informed citizens. In addition, they need to develop dispositions of mind and heart that impel them to make a return on the investment that has been made in them. They do so by becoming productive, engaged citizens. How that simple idea of providing a quality education is to be accomplished has been the subject of much research and even more discussion from the Cabinet level to the dinner table.

A Model for a Mission adds a component to the fundamental purpose of education. Providing a quality education must be grounded in and based on lasting principles that remain consistent wherever they are applied. Such principles can be used as benchmarks to judge behavior, actions and outcomes. *A Model for a Mission* suggests

that a quality education must be based on and grounded in lasting principles of excellence, dignity and connectedness.

AN ORIENTATION TO LASTING PRINCIPLES

Being grounded in these principles means choosing those actions and participating in those activities that enhance them rather than diminish them. Being oriented to excellence calls for changing a perception about excellence: that an individual or a school has to be the best there is and has to achieve that position at the top by any means possible. Instead, it needs to be conceived as constantly surpassing one's personal best. The never-ending effort to be better tomorrow than yesterday challenges the individual and the organization. Preparation programs provide successful future leaders with opportunities to consider and apply strategies related to an orientation toward excellence.

An orientation to dignity means choosing actions and participating in activities that enhance dignity rather than diminish it. Contributing to self-esteem and self-respect, marks of dignity, can be achieved by choosing to develop capability rather than dependence. Leaders prepared for tomorrow who are oriented toward dignity will help individuals move from conforming to norms to internalizing those norms and having a part in designing them. Individuals and groups will be transformed from being observers to committed participants. Interactions will go beyond protecting the status quo into those that produce growth. Such changes among individuals and groups transform the organization and steers the educational enterprise to greater congruence with its purposes and intended outcomes (Kushner, 1982). Enhanced self-respect and sense of esteem will result from achieving important goals.

Connectedness refers to drawing people together rather than separating, segregating, or discriminating against them. It also means including others in decision making and welcoming them to participate in creating a future of their choice. An orientation toward connectedness further means associating young people with the events of their past, including them in decisions regarding their present, and recognizing them as bridges to the future. Connecting means sharing activities, experiences, opportunities, meaning and understanding as well as money, time, information.

Simple assent to an orientation to principles of excellence, dignity and connectedness is certainly possible in theory. The complexity of acting on these principles lies in the hard work of making them a reality through preparation programs for tomorrow's leaders. Doing so requires a supportive environment in which these principles can be applied and practiced. For tomorrow's leaders to achieve the school's mission and purpose, today's preparation programs will need to provide time to reflect on and visualize the components of an environment that supports the school's mission.

A SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT

The mission of the school, to provide a quality education based on and grounded in lasting principles, thrives in a supportive environment. Such a supportive environment can be conceptualized as having four cornerstones that represent fundamental human needs: "to live, to love, to learn, to leave a legacy" (Merrill, et al, 1994). These four Ls, when extrapolated and applied to an organization, have the power to create an environment in which the mission can thrive.

The **L**ive cornerstone refers to the need for the organization to continue in existence, to live into the future to do its good work. It also means that those who

work there have meaning in their work life and that they can do good works at work while they make a living. Continuing the existence of the organization into the future requires a leader with an entrepreneurial frame of mind, one who organizes, operates, and assumes risk for a greater good, who cares and works so the organization will thrive. Preparation programs must include education for entrepreneurial leadership.

The second cornerstone, **L**ove, represents relationships. All engaged in the educational enterprise must realize that they belong to something larger than themselves and in that belonging, have something to contribute. Preparation programs must go beyond the individual success of the school leader and the effectiveness of school achievement on standardized tests. Tomorrow's leaders must possess the skills and dispositions for building a community of learners whose members recognize that together they are building the future.

The third cornerstone, **L**earn, represents the need to capitalize on the basic human characteristic of wanting challenge. School can no longer be a place where teachers teach and students learn. That paradigm of schooling has changed! School is a place where learning takes place, a place where everyone learns, adults (the learning leaders) as well as students. Preparation programs for leaders of 2000 and beyond will need to provide opportunities to enhance and develop learning leadership by requiring candidates to lead *from the position they hold*, instead of waiting for the position they desire.

The fourth cornerstone, leave a **L**egacy, refers to the intention to build a future by design, not by default. Young people under the care of the learning community are the builders of that future. All engaged in the educational enterprise recognize that

their efforts to act with excellence, dignity and connectedness guarantee the existence of these principles in the future. The legacy is an educational enterprise where learning takes place, grounded in excellence, dignity and connectedness and whose stakeholders, clients and customers reveal these principles in their professional and business lives, in their family and personal lives.

As the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration look ahead to possible futures, they are supported by many whose work has preceded them. Even a cursory look at past efforts and research findings will help us strengthen our resolve and encourage our creativity as we plan for *2000 and Beyond.*

CONTEXT OF RELATED LITERATURE AND RESEARCH

The learning leader builds community. This role has remained relatively stable over the last decade (Dillon-Peterson, 1981; Sergiovanni, 1996). Tomorrow's leader will draw people together through consensus, team building and participative management, shown to be effective over time in creating productive workplaces (Wynn, 1984; Hackman, 1990; Owens, 1995). It will be important to learn to lead *with* others to develop a learning organization that fulfills its mission by remaining true to its original purposes and by learning new ways to do so. Research affirms the effectiveness of broad participative action based on mission and vision. Participation in decision making has become a *sine qua non* of transformative leadership (Bolman & Deal, 1984; Senge, 1994).

As educational constituencies become better informed, more involved and politicized, their competing values can make disparate demands on the school leader. Creating a preferred future for the educational enterprise requires knowledge, skills and

dispositions for finding common ground among stakeholders' competing demands. Tomorrow's successful learning leaders will be entrepreneurs who willingly accept the risks entailed in organizational development.. They will seek out a variety of perceptions and self-interest from which to achieve consensus. They will encourage participation and help others accept responsibility for the kind of future they would all like to live in. Tomorrow's learning leaders will be prepared and supported by past knowledge and research. They will help the school's constituencies rise to the heights where they can consider the future they prefer to live in. They will use the teaching role of leadership helps stakeholders dialogue about real choices and takes responsibility for creating the future all would like to live in (Kushner, 1980; Weisbord, 19987; 1992; Weisbord and Janoff, 1995).

These ideas from past research are a guide to the future as The NCPEA considers programs for tomorrow's leaders. *The Model for a Mission* takes advantage of the strength of past tradition and purpose. This strength, coupled with ingenuity and creativity, suggests ways to fit present concerns with future needs.

THE FIT OF THE MODEL

Returning to fundamental purposes and lasting principles "fits" with future needs. With globalization of economics and the immediacy of communication, a lack of principled behavior is distressfully obvious. Individuals and organizations are reportedly voicing concern for and taking action against behavior that compromises the integrity of individuals and the environment on a global scale. Increased accountability for politicians is the result of increased scrutiny and demands for responsible behavior (Naisbitt, 1994). Such accountability and integrity can be no less urgent for educational leaders

than for political ones. For responsible self-direction to become common rather than heroic, young people need to be exposed to adults who behave in principled ways as a matter of routine.

Learning leaders in the classroom and school and district who are deliberate about their orientation to excellence, dignity and connectedness, offer young people opportunities to see these principles in action. Practical knowledge and examples of acting on principle are imparted to students during day to day interactions in the classroom and the school. Learning leaders will need to know how to create the environment in which such behavior is modeled and valued. The implication is that it is possible to help leaders develop skills for transforming their organizations belief and behavior are congruent. Preparation programs must parallel such congruence and afford opportunities for tomorrow's leaders to experiment, analyze, and rehearse.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE PROFESSION

Professional development that continually enhances knowledge, skills and dispositions for strategic, instructional, organizational, and political / community leadership (NCATE, 1995) must be augmented with an application of lasting principles in which to ground that education and support an environment in which to deliver it. Preparation programs will need to create a complex of social and cultural conditions affecting their learning communities these principles will form an important component of leadership development programs.

New learning, research and development in scientific and other fields will continue to influence the management and leadership of organizations in 2000 and beyond (Wheatley, 1992; Harrison, 1991). Schools as learning organizations already

feel the impact of changing paradigms about the nature of relationships and information (Wheatley, 1992; Cohen and Stewart, 1994). Tomorrow's leaders must understand, develop and use relationships to achieve the goals of the organization.

Successful preparation programs must help future leaders for education uncover and discover their own mission that brought them to prepare for a leadership position in the educational enterprise. They must learn ways to keep the mission constantly in mind. They must learn how to learn of others' missions. The result of this knowledge and skill will be that the mission becomes the magnet toward which all actions and behaviors tend over time (Stacy, 1992).

Including education for entrepreneurship in preparation programs will help future leaders become purveyors of learning. With entrepreneurial skills, they will how to audit organizational health, position the school's mission as a product in the minds of the school's constituencies, build high performance through team work, add value to organizational output (Simon and Sexton, 1996). Their legacy will be educated citizens with marketable skills who are disposed to make a return on the investment made in them as productive, contributing, active members of society.

Education in 2000 and beyond will be well served if today's preparation programs produce tomorrow's learning leaders: those who lead learning in their classrooms, schools and districts and who constantly are learning to lead better. The premise and promise of such preparation programs will leaders who have the knowledge and the will to provide a quality education, based on and grounded in lasting principles and delivered in a supportive educational environment. "In today are the seeds of tomorrow."

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